

KORNEI CHUKOVSKY

THE STOLEN SUN





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TRANSLATED BY DORIAN ROTTENBERG

DRAWINGS BY YURI VASNETSOV



RADUGA PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW





The sun went strolling in the sky
When suddenly a cloud came by.
Bunny took a look outside.
“Oh, how dark it is!” he cried.

And the magpies on the farm
Chattered loudly in alarm.
They hopped about the hills and plains
And shouted to the storks and cranes:
“Listen, listen, everyone,
The crocodile’s gobbled up the sun!”



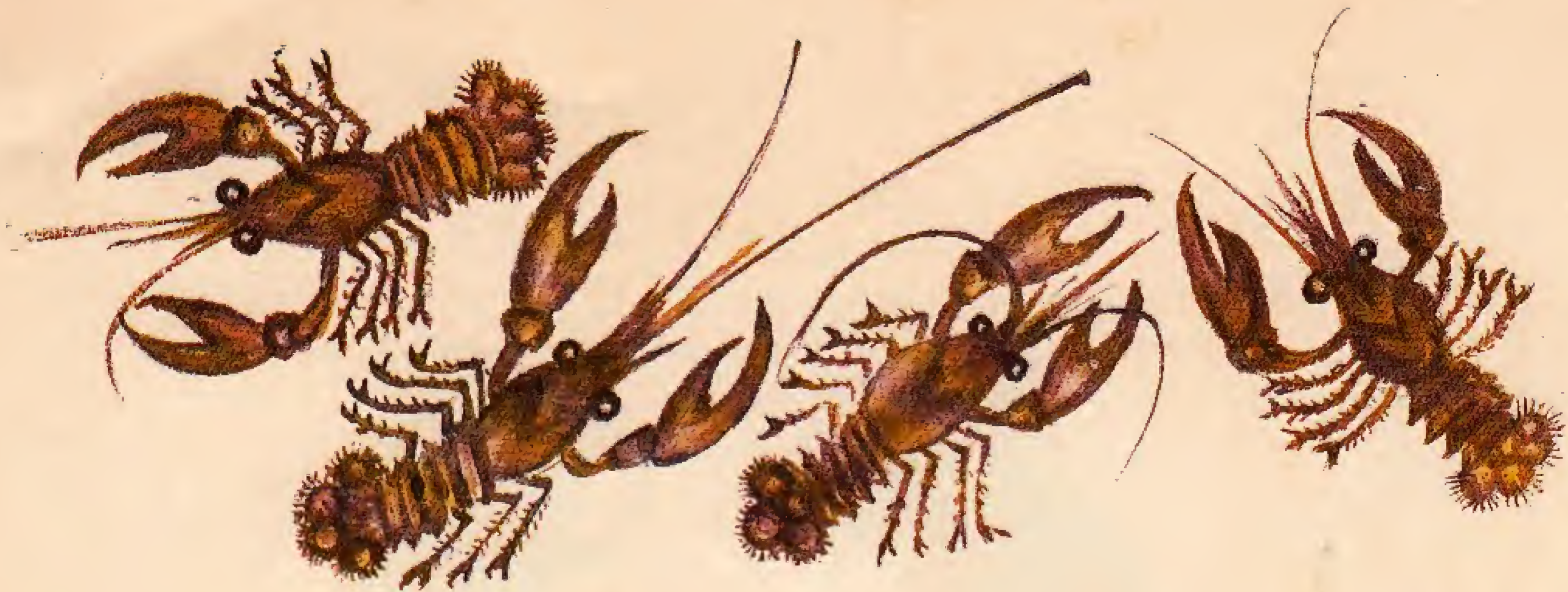


It got dark as dark can be,
Not a thing could people see.
He who ventured in the lane
Was never, never seen again.

So the timid little sparrow
Kept on sobbing in his sorrow:
“Please, dear sun, come out again!
We can’t see to peck our grain!”

And the rabbits wept
As they jumped and leapt:
Home was still so far away
And they couldn’t see their way.





Only in the murky swamp
The pop-eyed lobsters dared to romp
And the wolves beyond the hill
Howled and growled around their kill.



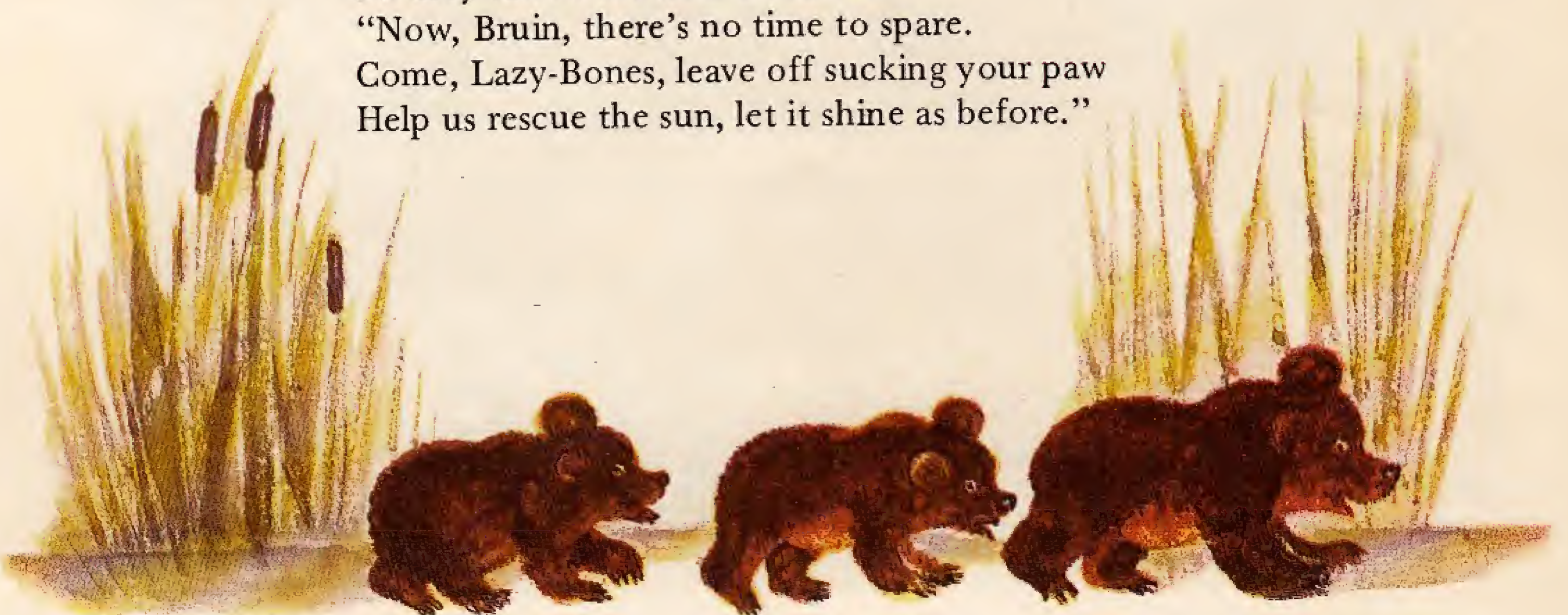


Early, early in the morning
While the land was wrapped in mourning
Loud and sharp came "Rat-tat-tat!"
Goodness gracious, what was that?

Two black sheep were at the gate:
"Come out, folks, before it's late!
Come and fight in heroes' style
And save the sun from the crocodile!"

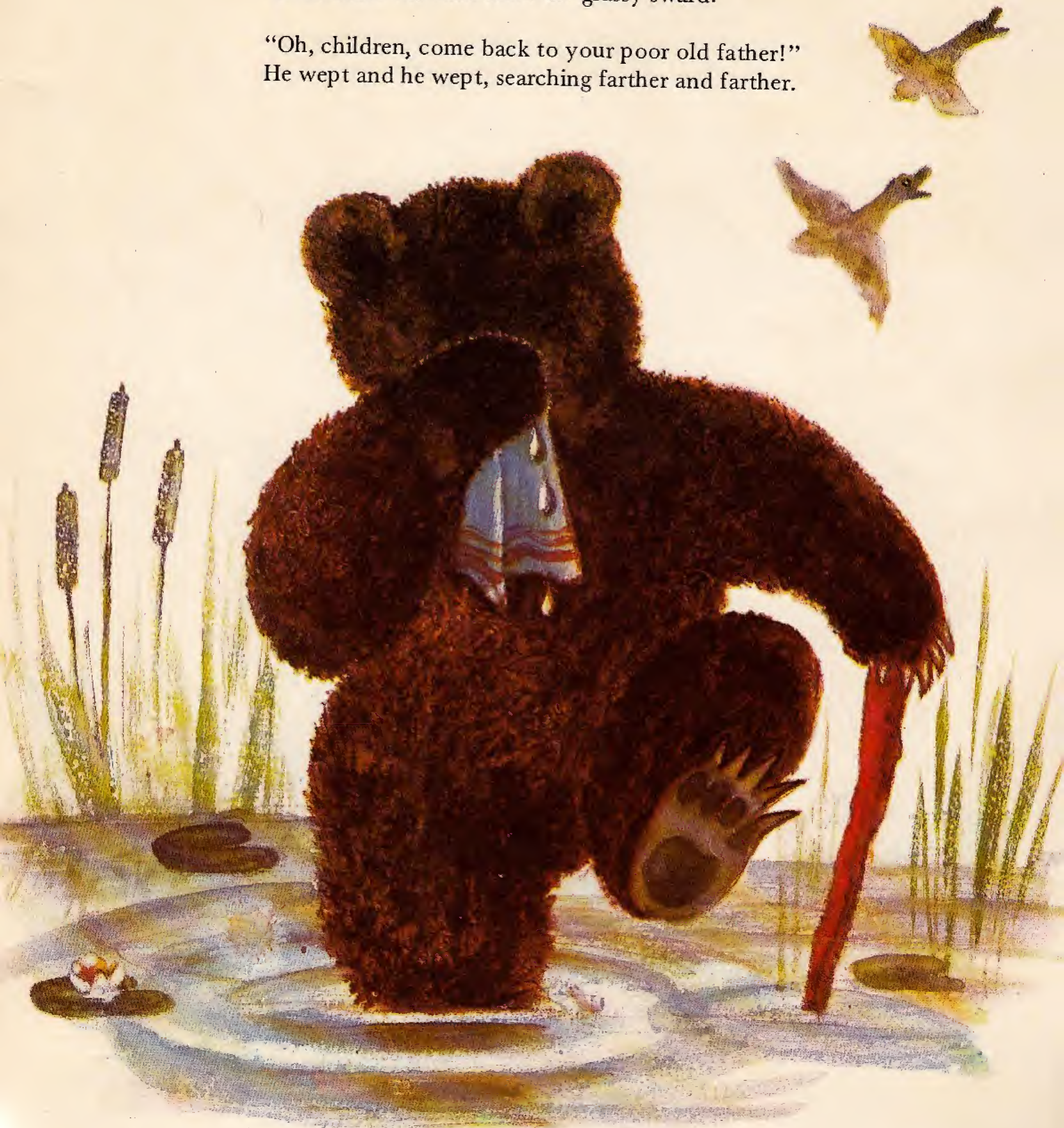
But the shaggy folk were mute,
Afraid to deal with such a brute.
"Such great teeth! And he weighs a ton!
He'll never give us back our sun!"

So they ran to the bear in his lair.
"Now, Bruin, there's no time to spare.
Come, Lazy-Bones, leave off sucking your paw
Help us rescue the sun, let it shine as before."



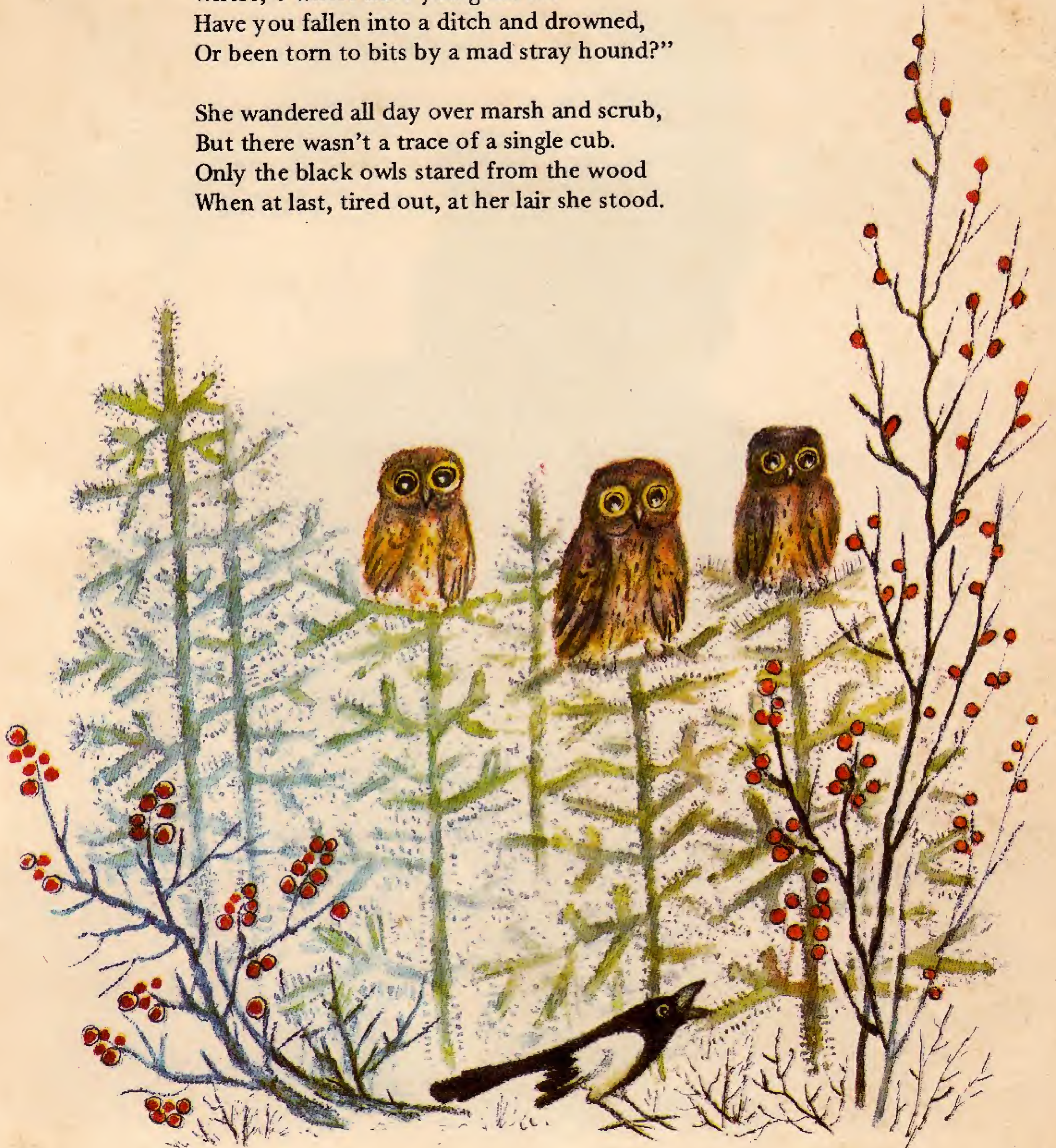
But, although he was big and mighty,
The bear didn't feel like fighting.
He roared and sobbed and he sobbed and roared
As he called his cubs from the grassy sward:

"Oh, children, come back to your poor old father!"
He wept and he wept, searching farther and farther.



And his wife, Mrs. Bear,
Looked around everywhere,
Under roots, under stumps, under stones, in despair:
"Oh, my Eddy, Teddy and Pronto!
Where, o where have you gone to!
Have you fallen into a ditch and drowned,
Or been torn to bits by a mad stray hound?"

She wandered all day over marsh and scrub,
But there wasn't a trace of a single cub.
Only the black owls stared from the wood
When at last, tired out, at her lair she stood.







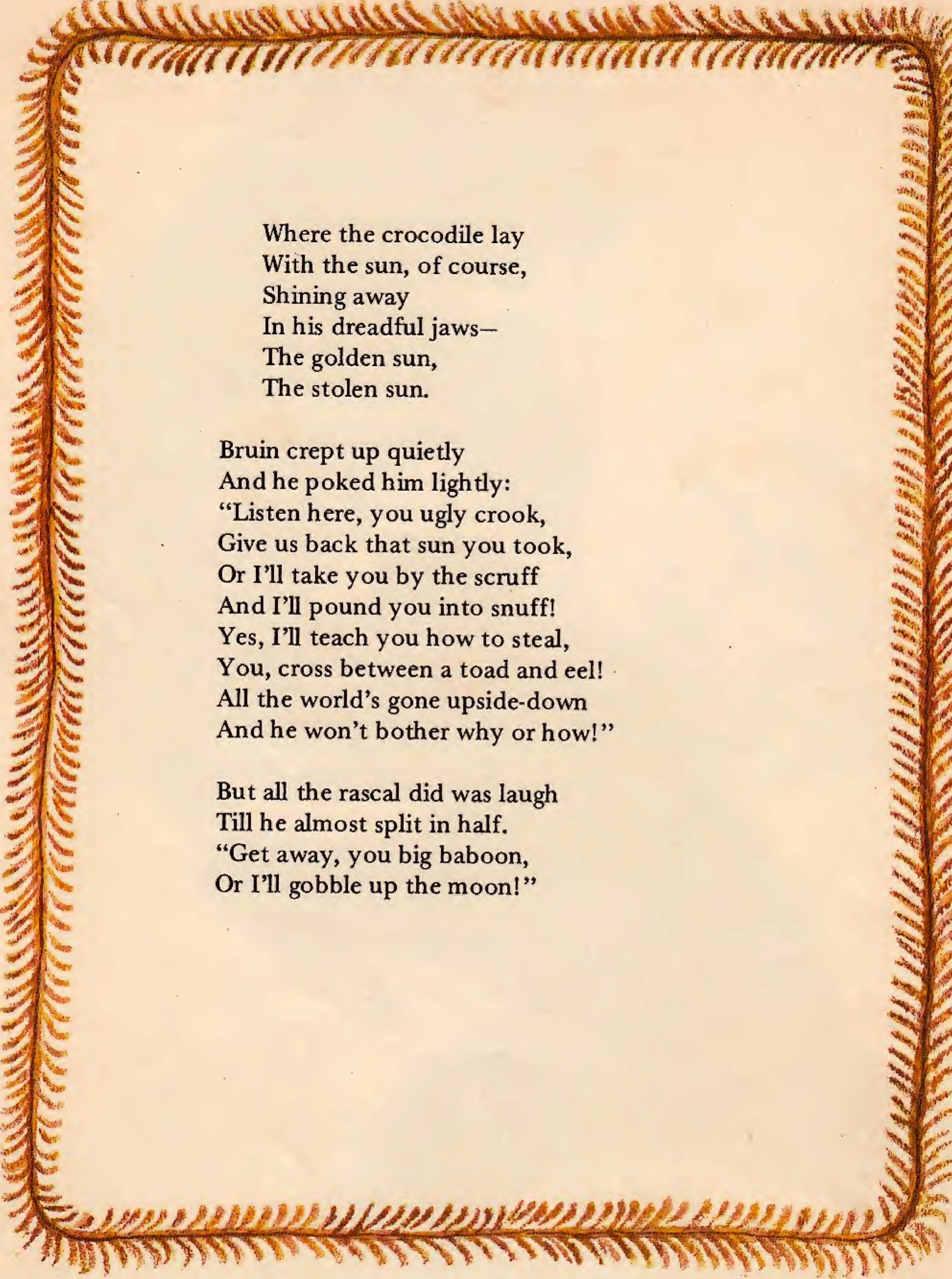
But then Mr. Bunny popped out
And began to scold and to shout:
“Stop whimpering like a hare!
Don’t forget you’re a bear!”

“Go on, Bandy-Legs, and grab him,
By the scaly collar nab him,
Bash him up and underneath,
Tear the sun from his ugly teeth.

And as soon as it once more
Shines in heaven as before,
All your little ones,
All your pretty ones
Will come running from afar:
'Hullo, Daddy, here we are!' ”

And the bear he reared
And the bear he roared
And the bear he ran
To the river ford.





Where the crocodile lay
With the sun, of course,
Shining away
In his dreadful jaws—
The golden sun,
The stolen sun.

Bruin crept up quietly
And he poked him lightly:
“Listen here, you ugly crook,
Give us back that sun you took,
Or I’ll take you by the scruff
And I’ll pound you into snuff!
Yes, I’ll teach you how to steal,
You, cross between a toad and eel!
All the world’s gone upside-down
And he won’t bother why or how!”

But all the rascal did was laugh
Till he almost split in half.
“Get away, you big baboon,
Or I’ll gobble up the moon!”





“That’s too much to bear!”
Roared the angry bear,
And his fangs went bare
At the enemy.

He hauled him up
And he mauled him up:
“Now, out with the sun, by golly!”

And the crocodile
Soon forgot his smile
And he yelled in fright
With all his might.

From his jaw,
From his maw
The sun flew high
Till it reached the sky,
And its bright light fell
Over hill and dell.





"Welcome, welcome, golden sun!"
Gladly shouted everyone.

All the birds took wing
And began to sing,
And the rabbits started dancing,
Turning somersaults and prancing
On the meadow by the spring.

Then the bear-cubs came along
And like jolly kittens
Tugged and pulled at their shaggy dad
With their soft brown mittens,
Shouting, calling Dad and Mum,
"Hullo, parents, here we come!"

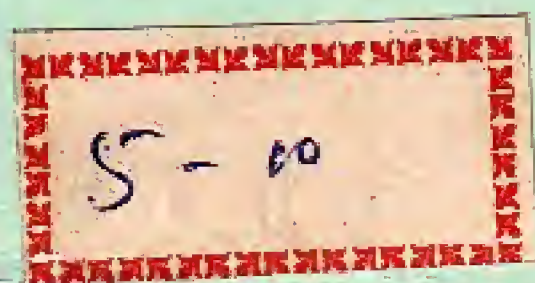
Every little girl and boy,
Every beast just beamed with joy.
They thanked old Bruin for the rescued sun
And they all had lots and lots of fun.



Raduga Publishers

First printing 1965
Second printing 1989

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



ISBN 5-05-003281-4